

CLAIMS

1. A method for operating a signalling gateway process comprising determining routing
5 information enabling an application server process to identify a signalling gateway process to which to direct signalling messages destined for a particular point code and making said information available to the application server process.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the information takes the form of a routing
10 table that serves to distribute signalling gateway process identifiers over possible signalling link selector values included in signalling messages sent by the application server process.
3. A method as claimed in any preceding claim comprising responding to a change in the
15 status of links upon a route to a particular point code by redetermining the routing information for that point code and making the redetermined information available to an application server process.
4. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the determined and/or
20 redetermined routing information is made available to the application server process in response to receipt of an audit message from the application server process for a particular destination point code.
5. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the determined and/or
25 redetermined routing information is included in a message transmitted from a signalling gateway process to an application server process that serves to indicate the availability of the point code concerned.
6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim including a registration step comprising
30 transmitting a signalling gateway process identifier to an application server process.
7. A method as claimed in claim 6 wherein the signalling gateway process identifier is
included in an acknowledgement by the signalling gateway process of a message indicating that the application server process is ready to receive signalling traffic.
- 35 8. A method for operating an application server process to sending signalling messages to a signalling network via signalling gateway comprising a plurality of signalling gateway

processes, the method comprising identifying a signalling gateway process to which to direct signalling messages destined for a particular point code by reference to routing information received from a signalling gateway process and SLS values contained in the signalling messages.

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9. A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein the routing information takes the form of a routing table that serves to distribute signalling gateway process identifiers over possible signalling link selector values included in the signalling messages.

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10. A method as claimed in claim 8 or claim 9 comprising repeatedly receiving the routing information from a signalling gateway process in messages that serve to indicate the availability of the point code concerned.

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11. A method as claimed in any of claims 8 to 10 comprising initiating the repeated sending of the routing information by including a request in an audit message for a particular destination point code sent to a signalling gateway process.

12. A method as claimed in any of claims 8 to 11 including a registration step requesting and receiving a signalling gateway process identifier from a signalling gateway process.

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13. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein the registration request is included in a message indicating that the application server process is ready to receive signalling traffic.

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14. A signalling gateway element arranged to carry out a method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7.

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15. A signalling gateway having a redundant set of signalling links to a signalling network and having a single point code, or set of point codes, therein, and comprising a plurality of signalling elements as claimed in claim 14, with each signalling element comprising a signalling unit to which a subset of the signalling links are connected.

16. An application server element arranged to carry out a method as claimed in any of claims 8 to 13.

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17. A signalling system comprising a signalling gateway as claimed in claim 15 within a signalling network and having a single point code, or set of point codes, therein, the signalling

gateway elements of the signalling gateway each having at least one connection with at least one application server element as claimed in claim 15.